8: Merriam& d'Azevedo E-4, 5 (1954-1955) 1957
NT20 Washo NT20

time with; that's all," to "it is just as important as the drum and the singing. Yes it means something; everything we use has a meaning. Right now I don't know the meaning, but it is a symbol."

The drum used by the Washo in Peyote ritual is usually made from a three-legged iron pot of a type formerly used by miners; these pots are approximately eight to ten inches in diameter and about six inches in depth, including legs an inch and a half long. The drum is considered a sacred object of great importance to song; thus the ritual of tying the instrument before a meeting or singing practice is carefully observed. The kettle must have been tested for timbre before it is chosen for use; the deerhide must be "Indian cured and tanned," and it is preferable that it not come from a deer which has been shot. At the beginning of the evening, the kettle is filled one half to three quarters full of water; seven pieces of glowing charcoal are added and the hide is then wetted in the water and stretched over the top of the pot. At this point it is the special task of the drumchief to fasten the drumhead by an intricate "star" design of thong or rope fastened from each of the seven pebbles (which should be naturally polished and not "made by machines") placed under the edges of the hide. The tie is referred to as the "star" because its completed design resembles a star shape viewed from the bottom of the pot. The hide is stretched taut in this way and seldom has to be retightened during the evening; it is kept wet by occasional shaking.

The drumstick is usually a carved, highly polished piece of hardwood, and individual Peyotists like to make and keep their own drumsticks which become potent with the power of drumming and singing after long use. During a meeting, drumsticks sometimes get out of hand and cannot be controlled; drummers say that the stick "drummed by itself," and that they no longer had a sense of holding it.

In performance the drum is ordinarily held between the knees and tipped slightly away from the player; the drumstick is held lightly between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, and the wrist is kept flexible. On occasion, arm and wrist are made rigid so that the drum can be struck with full force; this seems to be reserved for high points in the song when specia' emphasis is required. The drum is held by the four fingers and "worked" with the thumb of the left hand. The thumb is used for stopping the drumhead; it is pressed firmly over the surface of the hide until just the right pitch and timbre are achieved. Every drummer, during each song and with every drum, has to experiment anew for the right "place." To achieve a particularly "tight" sounding tone, the drummer sometimes lifts the drum to his lips, drinks a bit of water from it, and then blows air through the hide until the pressure from within distends it; bloated drums give an especially hard and desirable sound. Two or more drums are never used at one time.

Questioning about the problem of "good" drumming brings forth a varied response; two typical answers are:

The drummer is supposed to follow, but he carries the singer. He has to tune the drum according to the singer's pitch. He might have to shake the drum now and then to